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XBB.1.16 VARIANT DRIVES GLOBAL SURGE IN COVID CASES, DEATHS

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) so far, 3,648 sequences of the Omicron XBB.1.16 variant have been reported from 33 countries, including India, on open research platform GISAID, the global health body said. Meanwhile, India on Monday reported 7,178 new Covid cases in the last 24 hours, according to the data shared by the Union health ministry.

- Although there has been a "slight increase" in XBB.1.16-related hospitalisation in India and Indonesia, the levels are "much lower than seen in previous variant waves", as per the WHO.
- Further, "available information does not suggest that XBB.1.16 has additional public health risk relative to XBB.1.5 and the other currently circulating Omicron descendent lineages".
- "However, XBB.1.16 may become dominant in some countries and cause a rise in case incidence due to its growth advantage and immune escape characteristics," the WHO added.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Omicron subvariant XBB.1.16, present in 33 countries, is making a fresh surge in Covid infections as well as deaths in Italy, the US, the UK, Vietnam, and other nations, including India. According to the Italian Ministry of Health, the country recorded 27,982 new positive cases during April 14 and 20, compared to the previous week (21,779). The number of deaths also increased by 48.1 per cent, totalling

191, compared to the previous week (129). Latest estimates from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that the subvariant XBB.1.16 accounts for 9.6 per cent of new infections this week - up from nearly 6 per cent of cases the week before and about 3 per cent two weeks prior. The UK Health and Security Agency (UKHSA) in the latest technical briefing said there were at least 135 cases of Omicron XBB.1.16, in the UK. It also claimed five lives in England. Media reports state that Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam logged 56

fresh coronavirus cases with 42 hospitalisations during the past 24 hours, on April 23. Currently, 180 patients are receiving treatment in medical facilities and 57 cases require mechanical ventilation. In addition, Singapore and Australia also are seeing over 100 Covid cases. The current Covid surge in India is showing signs of slowing. In the last seven days, cases across the country rose by 20 per cent, a significantly lower rate than the 80 per cent to 110 per cent spikes seen in the previous five weeks, as the seven-day case count fell in four states where infections had earlier been surging. Kerala, which has been reporting the highest number of new cases, logged a 13 per cent drop in the current week. Cases also fell in Gujarat, Himachal, Goa, Jammu and Kashmir, while showing no rise in Maharashtra. The global health body, last week, also upgraded XBB.1.16 as a Covid-19 "variant of interest" (VOI) due to its "sustained increase" and "growth advantage" reported from several countries. Maria Van Kerkhove, technical lead for Covid-19 response at WHO said in a tweet that XBB.1.16 has shown "growth advantage and immune escape".

NITISH MEETS MAMTA AND AKHILESH, SAYS AIM TO THROW OUT BJP

Team Absolute | Kolkata

West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee and her Bihar counterpart Nitish Kumar on Monday stressed that the opposition parties need to shed their egos to unite against the BJP for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. The remarks came after Banerjee met Nitish Kumar and Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav at the state secretariat of Nabanna IN THE afternoon. After the meeting, the Chief Ministers addressed the media and stressed for an opposition unity which has to be achieved by shedding individual egos. "We are always together. The BJP has become the hero and there is a need to convert them into zero. There is no question of personal ego. In the coming days we will move together," Banerjee said. Echoing her, Nitish Kumar said that all the anti-BJP opposition parties will have to unite before the 2024 elections. "Let us all sit



together and discuss how to move ahead in the coming days. We had an extremely fruitful discussion and we have agreed that all will have to get united and move together," he said. However, from the brief media interaction, it was clear whether the two Chief Ministers agreed on including Congress in the bigger united opposition alliance. Continuing his pitch for opposition unity ahead of 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Bihar Chief Minister Bihar Nitish Kumar and his deputy Tejashwi Yadav met Samajwadi Party President Akhilesh Yadav in Lucknow

on Monday evening. Talking to reporters after the meeting, Nitish Kumar said that time had come for all parties to come together and throw out forces that had done nothing for the country. "There is no work being done in the country - the only work is publicity. In Uttar Pradesh, no work has been done except publicity," he said. Nitish Kumar made it clear that he was no a Prime Ministerial candidate and said that his effort was only to bring the maximum number of parties on one platform and ensure removal of BJP from power.

'Better to wind up CBI'

SC sets aside Telangana HC order asking CBI to give questionnaire to YSRCP MP

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday set aside the Telangana High Court, which directed the CBI, investigating the murder of former Andhra Pradesh Minister Y.S. Vivekananda Reddy, to provide a written questionnaire in advance to MP Y.S. Avinash Reddy, who is also under the agency's scanner. The top court said it is really perturbed by the high court order. During the hearing, a bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud and comprising Justice P.S. Narasimha orally observed that if this is the standard for investigation, then it is better to wind up the CBI and added that imagine other accused citing this as a precedent. "First, anticipatory bail. Second, questionnaire by CBI. This is like rewriting criminal law jurisprudence... at the end of it, the CBI may or may not arrest you... the choice is of the investigating agency," the Chief Justice told senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, representing Avinash Reddy. The Chief Justice said if this is the yardstick, then the same written questionnaire will have to apply in all CBI and ED cases. "Look what the high court said, the petitioner shall attend the CBI office, the question and answer shall be in printed written form. Questionnaire may be handed over to the petitioner,



why do we need the CBI?" The top court observed that the high court has misapplied itself and passed an extraordinary order and such orders prejudice the investigation, especially when the CBI is ascertaining the role of several accused. It termed the high court order unwarranted, while quashing the direction the high court had issued to the CBI. However, the top court said the high court can proceed with the hearing of the anticipatory bail plea of Avinash Reddy on merits.

NO HEAT WAVE IN MOST PARTS OF INDIA FOR A WEEK: IMD

Team Absolute | New Delhi

New Delhi: There will be no heatwave for the next seven days in most parts of the country, the weather office said today, in a big relief after days of scorching heat. A fresh wet spell is expected in the northwest region from Friday, it added. Earlier this month, it had predicted above-normal maximum temperatures in most parts of the country except northwest and peninsular India, during April-June. The maximum temperatures were between 36-39 degrees Celsius in the northwest, central, and east India on Sunday, while it was 30-35 degrees in the rest of the country. The Himalayan region saw it between 15-25 degrees. "No heat wave conditions are likely in the country during the next seven days," the India Meteorological Department said in its latest bulletin. It said that the western Himalayan region is likely to receive rainfall from Wednesday and the northwestern plains from Friday. Thunderstorms have been predicted in central Maharashtra, Telangana, and southern Madhya Pradesh between Tuesday-Thursday. Southern states like Tamil and Kerala are likely to receive rain for the next three-four days. In Maharashtra, all schools affiliated with the state board have been shut till June 15 while the summer vacation extends till June 30 in Vidarbha region.

Wrestlers move SC for FIR against WFI President Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Wrestler Vinesh Phogat and other wrestlers have moved the Supreme Court seeking a direction for registration of an FIR against Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. As senior advocate Narendra Hooda mentioned the plea before a bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud on Monday, the Chief Justice asked Hooda to mention the matter again on Tuesday as his petition was not on the list of mentioning matters. According to the plea, Phogat and other wrestlers have cited an inordinate delay in registration of an FIR by Delhi Police against the WFI chief and urged the apex court to issue a direction to police to lodge a case against him. Counsel familiar with the development said the matter will be mentioned again for early hearing in the Supreme Court

on Tuesday. Amid the ongoing protests by wrestlers against Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, the Delhi Police have reportedly sought a report from the probe committee that was established by the Sports Ministry in response to the complaints. "We have received seven complaints and are currently conducting an inquiry into all of them. We will register an FIR once concrete evidence is obtained. In the course of our inquiry, we have requested a report from the Sports Ministry's probe committee that was established to investigate the accusations of sexual harassment made against the WFI chief," said a senior police official. On Sunday, Olympian wrestlers Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik, Phogat and other top Indian grapplers, restarted their protest against the WFI chief in Jantar Mantar in central Delhi. An Asian Games and Commonwealth Games gold medalist, Phogat broke down while speaking to reporters.

India begins 'Operation Kaveri' to rescue Indians stranded in Sudan



New Delhi | Agencies

About 500 Indians have reached Port Sudan under Operation Kaveri that has begun to evacuate nationals from the crisis-torn Sudan, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Monday. "Operation Kaveri gets underway to bring back our citizens stranded in Sudan. About 500 Indians have reached Port Sudan. More on their way,"

Jaishankar tweeted. India has positioned two heavy-lift military transport aircraft in the Saudi Arabian city of Jeddah and a naval ship at a key port in violence-hit Sudan as part of its contingency plans to evacuate its stranded nationals. The development comes even as France and Saudi Arabia have evacuated some Indians along with citizens of other countries as part of their evacuation mission from Sudan.

Helpline number issued to help the citizens of MP, HS made nodal officer
Bhopal : Citizens of Madhya Pradesh/India who are stranded in Sudan can register their information by calling the telephone number 91-755-2555582 for any kind of help. Residents of Madhya Pradesh whose family members or relatives are stuck in trouble in Sudan, can register information by calling CM Helpline 181 for their help. Along with this, information can also be lodged on CM Helpline Portal (www.cmhelpline.mp.gov.in) for any kind of assistance related to Sudan Crisis.

Vitamin D levels may affect body's response to cancer treatment: Study

The findings, published online in the peer-reviewed journal CANCER, showed that for patients with advanced melanoma, it may be important to maintain normal vitamin D levels when receiving immunotherapy medications called immune checkpoint inhibitors. Vitamin D has many effects on the body, including regulation of the immune system.

"Of course, vitamin D is not itself an anti-cancer drug, but its normal serum level is needed for the proper functioning of the immune system, including the response that anti-cancer drugs like immune checkpoint inhibitors affect. In our opinion, after appropriately randomised confirmation of our results, the assessment of vitamin D levels and its supplementation could be considered in the management of melanoma."
Lukasz Galus, Poznan University of Medical Sciences, Poland



LONDON | Agencies

Vitamin D levels may be key in determining the human body's response to anti-cancer immunotherapy, especially

among people with advanced skin cancer, according to a study. To see whether levels of vitamin D might impact the effectiveness of immune checkpoint inhibitors, the

team analysed the blood of 200 patients with advanced melanoma both before and every 12 weeks during immunotherapy treatment. A favourable response rate to immune checkpoint inhibitors was observed in 56.0 per cent of patients in the group with normal baseline vitamin D levels or normal levels obtained with vitamin D supplementation, compared with 36.2 per cent in the group with low vitamin D levels without supplementation. Progression-free survival -- the time from treatment initiation until cancer progression -- in these groups was 11.25 and 5.75 months,

respectively. Melanoma is a disease in which malignant (cancer) cells form in melanocytes (cells that colour the skin). Melanoma can occur anywhere on the skin. Unusual moles, exposure to sunlight, and health history can affect the risk of melanoma. A previous study, published in Melanoma Research earlier this year, showed that people who took vitamin D regularly were less likely to have had melanoma in the past or currently. They were also deemed by dermatologists to be less likely to develop melanoma in the future.



PM MODI SURPRISES EVERYONE BY WALKING ON KOCHI STREETS DURING ROAD SHOW

Kochi | Agencies

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who arrived in Kochi on Monday evening for his two-day trip to Kerala dressed in typical local attire, took everyone by surprise when he decided to walk for a while on the streets during his road show.

As per the actual programme, PM Modi was supposed to move in his official vehicle. However, he surprised one and all when he decided to walk down the streets.

Thousands of people who were waiting for a long time looked surprised when they saw PM Modi walking past them, waving hands.

As he walked, people showered flowers on him.

After walking for 20 min-



utes, he got into his vehicle and was standing and greeting the people who were seen waiting on either side of the roads, and also on top of the buildings.

Soon, he reached the venue to a warm welcome,

and greeted the guests on the dais.

On Tuesday, he will arrive at the state capital to flag off the state's first Vande Bharat train and also launch a slew of projects. Around noon, he will fly to Surat.

ED seizes 91.6 cr in action against app/payment gateways dealing into crypto

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) recently conducted searches against the offices of an app which dealt into cryptocurrencies and seized 91.6 crore lying in various Payment Gateways/accounts.

The search was carried out on April 21 at three bank/payment gateways premises in respect of the accounts held by the entities controlled by Bhupesh Arora and his associates in connection with an investigation relating to the misuse of App-based token named "HPZ" and other similar applications by several entities.

The ED lodged the case on the basis of an FIR registered by Cyber Crime Police Station, Kohima, Nagaland, under various sections of IPC against HPZ token and others.

"The HPZ Token was an App-Based Token which promised users of



large gains against investment by investing in mining machines for Bitcoin and other crypto currencies.

Investigation unearthed larger conspiracy and involvement of various entities in money laundering," said

the official.

ED Investigation revealed that Lillian Technocab Pvt. Ltd and Shigoo Technology Private Limited were involved in the operating and collecting money from investors in the name of HPZ token. Bhupesh Arora and his associates had control over Shigoo Technology Private limited and he was indulged in operating unregistered gaming Apps/website in this company and various other entities and was collecting money fraudulently from the gullible public in the garb of these Apps/website.

"During the searches, the total amount of Rs. 91.6 Crore was found lying in various Bank accounts/Merchant Accounts maintained with Banks/Payment Gateways of the entities involved in money laundering and the same was frozen. Total freezing in this case is now Rs. 178 Crore," said the official.

SHARMILA ARRESTED FOR ASSAULTING POLICE PERSONNEL

Hyderabad | Agencies

YSR Telangana Party (YSRTP) leader Y.S. Sharmila was on Monday arrested by the Hyderabad police for assaulting police personnel on duty.

Sharmila's two drivers were also booked under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

On a complaint by a sub-inspector of police, a case was filed against the sister of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy at Banjara Hills police station.

Sharmila will be produced before a magistrate later in the day.

On the complaint by the sub-inspector, police registered a case against Sharmila and her drivers under IPC's Sections 353 (Assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 332 (Voluntarily causing hurt to deter public servant from his duty), 509 (Word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman), and 427 (mischief causing damage).

Another case was booked under IPC section 337 (Causing hurt to any person by doing any act so rashly or negligently as to endanger human life, or the personal safety of others).



Earlier, Deputy Commissioner of Police Joel Davis said police had gone to Sharmila's house following information that she was going to the office of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the Telangana State Public Service Commission (TSPSC) question paper leak. Since there was no permission for Sharmila's visit to the SIT office, the police personnel were trying to explain the same to her but she

assaulted police personnel.

A driver of Sharmila's car also did not stop the car on the order of police and hit them, injuring constable Giribabu. Sharmila allegedly man-handled two sub-inspectors and a woman constable. One of the SI's went to hospital for treatment.

The YSRTP leader was taken to Jubilee Hills police station. Later, when her mother Y.S. Vijayamma went to the police station to meet her.

When she was stopped by the police, she had an argument with them. A video shows Vijayamma slapping a woman police constable.

Police forcibly sent Vijayamma back to her house. She alleged that police acted in a high-handed manner. She wanted to know how long Sharmila would be placed under house arrest. Sharmila's husband Anil Kumar later went to Jubilee Hills police station and met her.

BJP leaders clash with each other over denial of tickets

Ghaziabad | Agencies

Ahead of the arrival of Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak, BJP workers clashed with each other over denial of tickets. The fracas took place at the office of Sunita Dayal, the party's mayoral candidate for the Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation (GMC) polls.

Some workers also created a ruckus at the office of BJP MLA Ajit Pal Tyagi in the city.

The chaos at both the places prevailed for about 3 hours, and finally the matter was settled.

The video of both the incidents has surfaced. It can be seen in the video that the workers are fighting with each other while senior BJP leaders and policemen are trying to pacify them. Deputy CM Brijesh Pathak was about to arrive in the city on Monday to officially nominate the mayor candidate. Earlier, BJP's metropolitan in-charge Amit Valmiki, metropolitan president Sanjeev Sharma and many MLAs and all senior officials had gathered at the mayor's office. In the meantime, some workers started reaching there to complain as they were denied tickets.

Workers from the side of MP General V.K. Singh and Sahibabad MLA Sunil Sharma also came. These were the people who were



denied tickets of councillor from BJP, and other candidates were finalised.

"A candidate who lives in Delhi has been given ticket from Raj Nagar Extension area. In such a situation, how can we accept an external candidate," a worker alleged.

Another worker alleged that pockets have been filled in distributing tickets in the name of BJP state president. The workers who created ruckus at the office of MLA Ajit Pal Tyagi said that ever since Reena Bhatia has been given the ticket for the Khoda chairman seat, the names of eligible candidates are being deleted. "So far three names have been struck off and six have been put on hold. All this is happening at the behest of MLA Ajit Pal Tyagi," they alleged.

16,000 posts vacant in Education Department alone: Himachal minister

Shimla | Agencies

With 16,000 posts vacant in the Education Department alone, a meeting of the Cabinet Sub Committee on employment opportunities, presided over by Industries Minister Harshwardhan Chauhan, was held here on Monday to discuss filling of vacant posts in various government departments.

Around 70,000 posts of different categories are lying vacant in various departments, said the Industries Minister.

In the past five years, 2,375 posts were filled through the HP Public Service Commission and 15,706 posts through HP Staff Selection Commission.

He said the Cabinet Sub Committee expressed its concern over the slow recruitment process and it would also examine the mechanism to speed up the process.

The minister said in tribal areas, various posts were lying vacant in different departments, especially in the Education Department. He said the government would prioritise filling the vacant posts so that studies of students are not hampered for want of teachers.



He said that about 16,000 posts are vacant in the Education Department and the government is looking to fill these posts at the earliest.

Chauhan said the Congress has promised one lakh jobs in its election manifesto. This was the second meeting of the Cabinet Sub Committee in this regard. He said another meeting of this Sub-Committee has been scheduled for April 25.

WOMAN FOUND DEAD IN DRAIN NEAR DELHI'S ASHOK NAGAR

New Delhi: A 19-year-old woman was found dead in a drain near Delhi's Ashok Nagar area on Monday, an official said.

The deceased was identified as Swati, a resident of New Ashok Nagar.

According to police, a police control room call was received on Monday wherein the caller Pawan Jha stated that his daughter Swati was missing since Saturday evening and her slipper has been found at drain near Dharamshila Hospital in the area.

"On this information, staff reached the spot. Divers from Disaster Management were called on spot and the missing female was searched. After sincere efforts, her dead body was retrieved from the drain about 25 meters from Dharamshila Hospital," said the official. The woman was identified by her father and husband. "No injury mark was found on her body. Crime team was also called to inspect the spot. Body was removed to LBS Hospital," the official added. On initial enquiry, it was revealed that her marriage was solemnised on May 31, 2020 with Surjeet. Her husband Surjeet has a private job. Her father is a driver at a company in Noida, said the official. The official said that Swati had some mental problems since 2017 and was undergoing treatment at IHBAS Hospital.

"She was being treated for depression. Prima facie it seems to be a suicide case. Further enquiry is being conducted," the official added.



Two PFI members arrested in Assam's Dhubri

Guwahati | Agencies

Two members of the banned organisation Popular Front of India (PFI) -- evading arrest since September 2022, have been apprehended in Assam's Dhubri district, the police said on Monday.

The arrested individuals have been identified as Shafiqul Islam and Saiful Islam. According to sources, they recently returned to their home after being on the run for a long time.

Police began a covert operation based on specific information, and on Monday morning, both were arrested.

Shafiqul Islam was detained in the



Bagulamari neighbourhood of Dhubri town. During questioning, he provided information on his companion, Saiful Islam, who was eventually taken into custody. The police claimed that Shafiqul and Saiful were "promoting nasty and anti-national ideas" among the children while working as teachers at a Dhubri madrasa. Prasanta Kumar Bhuyan, Inspector General

(Law and Order) of Assam Police, stated they were keeping a close eye on the PFI's activities, and some of the top members of the banned group have recently been detained.

"Our team searched the area and detained two Dhubri-based PFI cadres. They had just arrived in Assam from another nearby state. They are being questioned, and we are looking into the overall situation," he said.

Two PFI members and a leader of its student wing, Campus Front of India, were detained earlier this month in Assam's Barpeta district. Cash, a few devices, bank accounts, and documents were seized by the police from their possession.

Day 2 of 12th edition of Great Indian Travel Bazaar 2023

■ Culinary Showcasing by Celebrity Chef, Ranveer Brar. G 20 Tourism Golf Expo

Lalit Sharma | Jaipur

On the second day of the 12th edition of Great Indian Travel Bazaar (GITB), the exhibition at the Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Center (JECC) in Sitapura was inaugurated. The exhibition opened with the cutting of the ribbon by Director General, Tourism, Government of India, Manisha Saxena; Principal Secretary, Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan, Gayatri Rathore; Past President, FICCI, Dr. Jyotsna Suri and Chairperson, FICCI Tourism and Culture Committee & MD, SITA, TCI, & Distant Frontiers, Dipak Deva. Throughout the day there were power packed Buyer-Seller prescheduled B2B meetings.



The international mart has been organized by the Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). It is supported by leading national and regional associations like Hotel & Restaurant Association of Rajasthan (HRAR), Indian Heritage Hotels Association (IHHA) and Rajasthan Association of Tour Operators (RATO).

Held after a gap of 3 years, 283 tour operators from 56 countries and State Tourism Board representatives from 9 states are participat-

ing in the event.

During an interaction between foreign buyers and the Department of Tourism, Additional Chief Secretary, Forest, Environment and Climate Change Department, Government of Rajasthan, Shikhar Agarwal highlighted the sustainable and eco friendly tourist destination in the state. He said that last year Ranthambore alone received 5 lakh tourists last year generating a revenue of INR 45 crore. He also revealed new destinations that have been developed in the state such as Palghat on Chambal river, Boat Safari in Dholpur etc. Talking about leopard safaris, he said that while

Jhalana is already well known, Amargarh leopard reserve has also started recently and now another leopard safari will start in Maila Bagh - giving Jaipur as many as 3 leopard safaris. A bird park is also being developed in Jaipur. The session was moderated by Director, Tourism Department, Government of Rajasthan, Ms. Rashmi Sharma.

CULINARY SHOWCASING BY CELEBRITY CHEF, RANVEER BRAR

Celebrity Chef Ranveer Brar did a live food demonstration for the attendees of the Mart. Focusing on millets, he showed how the popular Rajasthani dish, Gatta can be made with millets. He also talked about the importance of ghee and spices in Indian cuisine. On the occasion, Brar said that Indian food is misconstrued as being very spicy. However, out of the 1100 micro cuisines of Indian food, 400 do not even use spices. Later the food was also available for tasting of the attendees.

Drunk Indian passenger urinates on co-passenger on New York-Delhi flight

Team Absolute | New Delhi

An allegedly inebriated Indian passenger, travelling on a New York-Delhi American Airlines flight, reportedly relieved himself on another passenger on board the flight, sources said.

A senior police officer said that legal action has been taken for non-cognisable offences under the civil aircraft rules.

"We have initiated action after receiving a complaint from the airline staff about the unruly behaviour of one passenger. However, there is no corroborative evidence or complaint given by the co-passengers regarding someone peeing on them yet," the officer said.

According to sources, the accused passenger, who was reportedly under the influence of alcohol, got engaged in an argument with a co-passenger on board American Airlines flight AA 292 and urinated on him.

After the plane landed at the Indra Gandhi



International (IGI) Airport at around 9 p.m. on Sunday, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) apprehended the alleged 'unruly' passenger.

On November 26 last year, an intoxicated man had reportedly urinated on a female co-passenger in her seventies while on a business class Air India flight from

New York to Delhi. The incident had made national headlines.

Another incident occurred on December 6, 2022, in an Air India flight from Paris to New Delhi in which a male passenger allegedly relieved himself on a vacant seat and blanket belonging to a female passenger while she was using the lavatory.



RURAL INDIA FACED DISCRIMINATION UNDER CONGRESS, SAYS PM MODI

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday lambasted the Congress and accused it of discriminating against rural India during its long rule in the country.

While addressing a gathering in Madhya Pradesh's Rewa on the occasion of 'Panchayati Raj' day, the PM said that the villages were kept away from development, while his government is determined to set the path of growth in the lives of people living in rural India.

"Though, during the 1990s, the Congress government did take some steps for development, but those were not enough. The Congress destroyed the Panchayati Raj system, which was the dream of Mahatma Gandhi. After 2014, rural India has started witnessing developments in



Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Modi launched various projects,

including e-GramSwaraj and GeM portal for procurement of goods and services at the panchayat level.

On the occasion of 'Panchayati Raj' day, he performed the virtual 'Griha Pravesh' (house-warming ceremony) for 4.11 lakh beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) in the rural part of Rewa.

Meanwhile, he inaugurated various projects worth Rs 7,853 crore under the Jal Jeevan Mission for three districts of Vindhya region - Rewa, Sidhi and Satna. He also flagged off three trains, one of them being Rewa to Nagpur (Chhindwara and Betul).

PM Modi also launched the 'Joint Steps towards Development' campaign with the aim of increasing people's participation in ensuring full benefits of government schemes.

During his visit to Rewa, PM Modi also laid the foundation stone and dedicated to the nation various railway projects worth about Rs 2,300 crore.

SC transfers all FIRs against comedian Munawar Faruqui to Indore

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday transferred, to Indore, all FIRs against comedian Munawar Faruqui for allegedly making remarks on Hindu deities during a show and hurting religious sentiments.

A bench headed by Justice B.R. Gavi also extended Faruqui's interim protection for three weeks in connection with a production warrant in Delhi. The bench, also comprising justice Sanjay Karol, made it clear that the court has not gone into the merits of the plea for quashing the case. As Faruqui's counsel contended that FIRs should not be transferred to Indore as there is threat to his client's safety over there, the bench orally observed: "Indore is a safe city. It is also close to Mumbai. What is the issue



with transferring the FIRs to Indore?" The counsel urged the bench to club the FIRs and transfer them either to Mumbai or Delhi and not Indore or Prayagraj. He said there was a huge mob and there were threats to his client's safety in these cities. After hearing arguments, the bench said: "Taking into

consideration the facts and circumstances, and the previous order of this court, we are inclined to transfer all the complaints to a police station in Indore." The bench said it has not considered the merits of the matter insofar as the prayer for quashing and the petitioner is at liberty to initiate such proceedings as permitted under the law. In February, the top court had released Faruqui on an interim bail by staying the Madhya Pradesh High Court order, declining to grant him bail. The son of a BJP MLA had filed a complaint against Faruqui and others. According to the FIR, the remarks were made at a comedy show held at a cafe in Indore in January 2021. It was alleged that in the show jokes were made regarding Hindu gods and goddesses and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Chief Minister Chouhan planted saplings of Amla, Karanj and Gulmohar

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today planted saplings of Amla, Karanj and Gulmohar in the Smart Garden located at Shyamala Hills and performed shramdaan. Along with the Chief Minister, Atul Tare, Dr. Kumar Sanjeev and Minister Dheeraj Sharma planted saplings. Soumitra Joshi, Mr. Vinod Dubey, Rajlakhan, Pankaj Shukla and other representatives participated in the plantation. Tare, Dr. Kumar Sanjeev and Dheeraj Sharma expressed their gratitude for the initiative taken by the Chief Minister Chouhan for the construction of Hindi Bhavan in Gwalior.

Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, members



of Shambhavi Women's Club Bhopal Rekha Sharma, Mala Vijayvargiya, Amita Gurjar, Namrata Mandal, Dr. Parul,

Nikita Bansal, Shradha Singh, Pooja Soni, Monika Aggarwal and Anju Bharat Patel also planted saplings.

MAN DIES BY SUICIDE OVER FAMILY'S FINANCIAL SITUATION

Sheopur: A 24-year-old man died by suicide by bursting a firecracker in his mouth in Madhya Pradesh's Sheopur district on Sunday, police said. Prima facie, the dead Brajesh Prajapati was tense as he couldn't pursue higher studies in a big city as his family's financial condition was not good. A police officer said the Prajapati took the extreme step as he was tense over some issues.

"Prajapati burst a 'sutli' bomb cracker in his mouth when he was in the toilet at around 9 AM. After hearing the sound, his family members rushed in. They shifted the injured man to a hospital, where doctors declared him dead," he said.

A case was registered and further investigation is underway.

Hridayesh, the elder brother of the dead, said Brajesh was good in studies and a student of B.Sc in a local college. He claimed the financial condition of the family was not good and they couldn't send Brajesh to a big city for studies.

'Pregnancy test' for eligibility for mass marriage ceremony sparks off controversy

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A controversy broke out over alleged "pregnancy tests" as part of eligibility for "Mukhyamantri Kanya Vivah" - a mass marriage scheme where the state government provides Rs 51,000 grant to each bride - in Madhya Pradesh's tribal-dominated Dindori district.

As per reports, the test was conducted before the beneficiaries were to take part in the mass marriage ceremony on the occasion of Akshay Tritiya on Saturday, and four women were removed after their positive pregnancy reports. Following the development, the opposition Congress sought to know under what guidelines these women were subjected to the tests. Local MLA Markam Singh said that he has learnt that four women were disqualified from the scheme because of their positive reports. He said that by con-



ducting such tests, the government has not only insulted the poor women, but also have put their life at risk after releasing their reports. "The state government must clarify what are the guidelines or rules for such pregnancy tests. What will be the future of those women whose test reports were made public," Markam Singh told reporter over phone on Sunday. According to Dindori district administration, a total of 219 women from Scheduled Tribes (ST), Schedule Castes (SC) and OBC families were brides in the mass marriage ceremony, conducted in the pres-

ence of local leaders and officials. The controversy escalated further after state Congress President Kamal Nath raised questions over the 'pregnancy tests' of women and demanded a high-level inquiry in the matter. "I want to know from the Chief Minister whether this news is true? If this is true, then on whose orders was such gross insult done to the daughters of Madhya Pradesh? Do the daughters of the poor and tribal communities have no dignity in the eyes of the CM?" he said in a series of tweets. What is surprising is that officials had different stands while responding to the matter. District Collector Vikas Mishra told the press that directives were issued during the mass marriage event for detection of sickle cell disease of those taking part. He also said that during the medical examination, some brides had complained of periods issues after which the pregnancy test was conducted.

Tejaswi program to be launched to develop entrepreneurial confidence and skills among students

MULTILATERAL MOU SIGNED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PS OF SCHOOL EDUCATION

STUDENTS WILL ALSO GET VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND FUNDS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A multilateral MoU was signed in Mantralaya for the implementation of the Tejaswi program prepared by the Department of School Education with the aim of developing entrepreneurial confidence and skills among the students on Monday. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the Commissioner of Public Instruction, the State Open School and sister organisations Udyam Learning Foundation and The Education Alliance. After signing between all the parties, a copy of the MoU was handed over to the Principal Secretary of School Education Rashmi Arun Shami.

It is worth mentioning that under the Tejaswi program, students will be provided information about new industries and self-business from school time itself. A separate curriculum has also been developed for this. Based on this curriculum, special classes of 40 minutes will be conducted three days a week in the schools. Along with this, experience-based training programs and project work based on various innovative



businesses will also be conducted. The necessary amount for this will also be made available by the government under the programme. With this school students will be motivated to self-employment and establishment of new enterprises.

In this regard, Minister of State for School Education (Independent Charge) Inder Singh Parmar said that "The

vision with which Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has envisioned self-reliant Madhya Pradesh and declared Madhya Pradesh Youth Policy for the establishment of self-reliant and hardworking youth society."

Principal Secretary of School Education Rashmi Arun Shami said that "According to the vision of Atma Nirbhar Madhya Pradesh, adding the recently announced youth policy of Madhya Pradesh, to realise the dreams of the future, the students should face the challenges from the school level itself. It is necessary to develop competencies and a professional attitude. Tejaswi program to develop these qualities in the students. She said that this program is currently being created on an experimental basis for the students of classes IX and XI of the government schools of two metropolitan cities of the state, Bhopal and Indore, which will be operated in the entire state in the future among the students of classes IX to XII.

Commissioner Public Instruction Anubha Srivastava informed that the objective of this program is to inculcate entrepreneurial confidence and 21st-century skills in the students so that they are better prepared for the challenges of life.

Truck rams auto, 3 killed: video goes viral

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Three people died in a horrific road accident in Berasia, Bhopal. The accident happened on Monday morning in front of Bio Coal Factory near Kulhor Crossroads on Vidisha Road, when a speeding truck rammed the auto full of passengers from behind.

After this, it dragged the auto for about 50 meters. 6 people were sitting in the auto. 3 people are seriously injured. The CCTV video of the accident has also come to the fore. In which the truck is passing hitting the auto from behind. The accident happened at 10.34 am due to which there was chaos on the spot. On receiving the infor-

mation, the police reached the spot with the help of local people and 2 JCBs, took out the bodies of the dead and the injured from the auto. Habib (55) resident of village Jhikaria Tehsil Berasia, Pawan Jatav (26) resident of village Raipura district Vidisha and Mohan Jatav (38) resident of village Suakhedhi district Vidisha had died in the accident. The auto driver was also seriously injured in the accident. The police are trying to ascertain the identity of the other injured. It is seen in the video that the truck hit the auto from behind. After the collision, the auto overturned twice. After the accident, the driver left the truck and fled from the spot.

Acharya Shankar Prakatotsav 'Ekam Parv' Today

Chief Minister Chouhan will inaugurate the convocation and decoration ceremony

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Acharya Shankar Prakatotsav 'Ekam Parv' will be celebrated on Tuesday by Acharya Shankar Sanskritik Ekta Nyas (Cultural Integration Trust). The programme will start at Kushabhau Thakre Auditorium at 6 pm under the chief hospitality of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and presided over by Acharya Mahamandaleshwar Swami Awadheshanand Giri Maharaj. Tourism, Culture and Religious Trust and Endowment Minister Usha Thakur will be present. During this, respect will be given to the sanyas tradition and the academic world for giving momentum and loftiness to the eternal perpetual flow of Advaita Vedanta philosophy. Chief Chinmaya Mission Coimbatore Swamini Vimalananda Saraswati and Dr. Kanshi Ram, former pro-

fessor of Hansraj College, Delhi University, will be honoured at the investiture ceremony.

Principal Secretary Tourism and Culture and Trustee Secretary Sheo Shekhar Shukla informed that the Saraswat speech will be delivered by chief of Chinmaya Mission Coimbatore Swamini Vimalanand Saraswati. Along with this, there will also be a convocation ceremony for the participants of Advait Jagran Camps held in the year 2023.

A 108 feet tall multi-metal statue of Acharya Shankar, Shankar Museum and Acharya Shankar International Advaita Vedanta Sansthan are being set up at Omkareshwar under Punasa tehsil of Khandwa district by the trust. The name of this entire project has been fixed as 'Ekam Dham'. The aim is to make Omkareshwar a 'Global Center for Oneness'.

Second cheetah death at Kuno within month raises questions over officials' efficiency

Praveen Dwivedi | Bhopal

The death of another cheetah within a month has raised serious questions about the efficiency of officials at Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park (KNP). The KNP lost yet another cheetah when the six-year-old male feline Uday died on Sunday. Uday, who was given this name just recently, was among the 12 cheetahs that were translocated from South Africa in a special Indian Air Force plane under 'Project Cheetah' on February 18.

The officials associated with the KNP said that the cheetah died a few hours after the sudden deterioration of health during the treatment and the exact reason for his death would be confirmed only after the postmortem is done. However, sources said that the feline was "highly stressed".

The questions are also being raised because there was no report of ill health of Uday before Sunday.

According to the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department officials, the cheetah was found dull during the inspection in the morning on Sunday, following which the veterinarians alerted senior officials and it was taken out from the large enclosure for treatment.

Correspondent has learnt that ever since the first batch of eight cheetahs was released at KNP on September 17, there was infighting among state Forest Department officials due to one or another reasons. Sources claimed that the appointment of some senior officials at KNP was questioned within the department and the infighting had reached the state Forest Ministry.

Some senior forest officials were reshuffled recently - for instance, P.K. Sharma who was serving as DFO at KNP was transferred to Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR), while Rajneesh



Singh who was DFO at Pench was transferred to the KNP.

More importantly, some wildlife activists had raised their concerns over the appointment of Uttam Sharma as Chief Conservator of Forest (CCF).

Madhya Pradesh-based wildlife activist Ajay Dube, seeking the attention of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), had warned that the life of translocated cheetahs "would be in danger".

"The kind of activities (that) are happening, I am raising my concern that the life of cheetahs at KNP would be in danger," Dube had mentioned in a letter written to Chief Minister Chouhan and the NTCA on September 22, just five days after eight Namibian cheetahs were released at KNP.

Talking to IANS on Sunday, Dube said: "Wildlife trained full-time director is vital for cheetah project because Uttam Sharma has proven to be inefficient. Transferred DFO Kuno P.K. Sharma should be relieved immediately and a thorough investigation is required on the death of two cheetahs."

Some other wildlife activists also raised questions on why Uttam Sharma, who is an expert of forest, was given the role of wildlife expertise at three places - at KNP, as CCF of Gwalior and as head of the lion project. "We have to understand that forest and wildlife, both are different. Uttam Sharma is undoubtedly a renowned forest expert as he has been a professor also, but his appointment as a wildlife official has always remained under question. Three radio-collared tigers were killed during his appointment in Panna Tiger Reserve," Dube said.

Earlier, a female Namibian cheetah Sasha died due to a kidney ailment at KNP on March 27.



EDITOR'S SPECS

26 regional parties got donations over Rs 189cr in 21-22

Twenty-six regional parties have received 5,100 donations worth Rs 189.801 crore -- both above and below Rs 20,000 -- during the 2021-22 financial year (FY), reveals a report by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). No donations have been declared by AIADMK, BJD, NDPP, SDF, AIFB, PMK and JKNC for FY 2021-22. The report focuses on donations declared by Regional Political Parties, during the Financial Year 2021-22, as submitted by the parties to the Election Commission of India (ECI). With regard to the total amount of donations, TRS leads with Rs 40.90 crore from 14 donations followed by AAP which has declared receiving Rs 38.243 crore from 2619 donations. JDU received Rs 33.257 crore that is the third highest amongst all regional parties. SP and YSR Congress have declared total donations Rs 29.795 crore and Rs 20.01 crore, respectively. Nearly 85.46 per cent or Rs 162.21 crore of the total donations received by regional parties, have been received solely by top five regional parties. ADR analysed 33 out of 54 regional parties and only 19 had submitted their donations reports to the ECI in the stipulated time period. Fourteen other regional parties have delayed their submission by a minimum of two days to 109 days. Maximum donations in cash were declared by IUML, which collected a total of Rs 5.55 lakhs, followed by KC-M with Rs 1 lakh, PDF with Rs 80,000, PPA with Rs 5,000 and AAP with Rs 120. Among all the states, donors from Tamil Nadu made the highest donations of Rs 5.55 lakhs in cash followed by donors from Arunachal Pradesh who donated a total of Rs 5,000 in cash. Nearly 4.78 per cent or Rs 1.828 crore of the total donations above Rs 20,000 made to AAP was received from abroad, the ADR report said.

ALL EYES ON BIHAR CASTE CENSUS: CAN IT BE THE NATIONAL TEMPLATE?

With the second phase of the caste based census underway in Bihar, the people of the state are starting to analyse its positives and negatives.

Ajay Kumar

The 'intellectual community' believes that it has some loopholes like the sub-castes in the Extremely Backward Class (EBC), Other Backward Castes (OBC), Dalit and Muslim communities will be counted but there is no provision to count sub-castes in upper castes. It has created suspicions in the minds of the people about the intentions of the state government, or this loophole being used for political purposes. Ashok Kumar, a Patna based private teacher, told IANS: "The state government is well aware that MLAs, MLCs and MPs of upper castes cannot advocate for their castes in Bihar. They believe that if they talk in the interest of upper caste people, their vote banks of lower castes may slip away from them and they might lose the election." "Two to three upper caste MLAs and MPs are in the RJD, BJP, JD-U, Congress, HAM and others but they are not vocal about the interests of their castes. On the other hand, Dalit and minority leaders talk in the interest of their castes. This is the reason why the state government is counting castes and sub-castes of EBC, OBC and the minorities but not in the upper castes. The leaders at the panchayat or block level may talk for the interest of their castes but in the rank of MLA, MLC and MP they cannot dare to do that. They are looking at their personal and party interests," Kumar said. "I am connected to the Bhumihar Ekta Manch Whatsapp group where a number of BJP leaders are also present. The BJP has decided to cel-

brate Babu Veer Kunwar Singh birth anniversary on April 23 which is okay but I have pointed out to celebrate Parsuram Jayanti as well on 22 but no one reacted to it," Kumar said. No one knows the actual numbers of castes but there is a general perception in Bihar that the numbers of EBC, OBC and minority communities are much higher than upper castes like Bhumihar, Brahmins, Rajput and Kayasth. The BJP has traditional voters belonging to the upper castes while Nitish Kumar is an undisputed leader of the Lav-Kush community and Lalu Prasad Yadav is a leader of Muslim-Yadav and other lower castes. Jitan Ram Manjhi is a leader of the Mahadalits and Chirag Paswan is a leader of the Dalit community. However, the caste based census has lots of positives as well. Dr Vijay Kishore, a Patna based economist said: "After the completion of caste based census, we would earmark the backwardness of a particular caste and community. Following that, the state and central governments are running many welfare programmes in the interest of EBC, OBC and minority communities. There is no political interest involved which I also believe will benefit the common people on the social, financial and political fronts." The first phase of the caste based census was completed in March this year where every house had a unique house code. The second phase kicked off from April 15 and will end in one month. In the second phase, Bihar government employees will go to every house and ask 17 questions printed on one sheet. The same will also be uploaded digitally as well so that anyone can access it from the inter-



net. The employees will ask the name of the family head, his/her father's name, age, sex, marital status, religion, caste, sub-caste (In case of EBC, OBC, minority) followed by code, educational qualification, profession, residential status (Staying in own house or rent), temporary migration status, owning computer, laptop, motor vehicles, agriculture land, residential land and income from all sources. Patna district magistrate and nodal officer of the caste based census in the district Dr Chandrashekhar Singh said: "It is

taking half an hour to collect the information on one family in physical and digital modes. We are also contacting people who are living abroad. We are asking their profession, tenure, castes, financial status with country code through video calling. Everything is going in a smooth manner." Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar said: "The report will be tabled in the Bihar Vidhan Sabha and Vidhan Parishad followed by it being sent to the Centre. The detailed report of the caste based census will be

put in the public domain as well. It will not only give the caste status of a particular person but also its financial status. It will help to make policies followed by the development of the people and eventually the state." "It is the responsibility of the Centre to conduct a census in the country. I am surprised that it has not happened in the last 12 to 13 years. The past governments were organising it every 10 years."

international

INDIAN NOT ALLOWED TO BRING PREGNANT SUDANESE WIFE HOME, CRIES FOR HELP

Meenakshi Iyer | Agencies

An Indian national in crisis-torn Sudan has been left in a spot after the Indian mission in Khartoum approved his evacuation request but left behind his pregnant wife who is a Sudanese national. Bobby Sebastian from Kottayam, Kerala, has been working in Khartoum for the past three years, and is married to Sudanese national Hala Muawia Mohamed Abuzaid. "Due to current unrest in the country and deadly situation we registered evacuation request to (the) Indian Embassy in Khartoum," Sebastian wrote in a message posted by author and migrant rights activist Rejimon Kuttappan on his social media. "The evacuation request was successful for me but unfortunately, my wife was not listed on the selected names... I feel it is very unsafe and dangerous to leave her here (Sudan), and also she is conceiving," the message read. Sebastian's Sudanese wife does not have a valid Indian visa or an OCI



card at the moment. According to Kuttappan, the couple has marriage documents, and the wife has also visited Kerala in the past. Sebastian has requested the relevant Indian authorities to intervene,

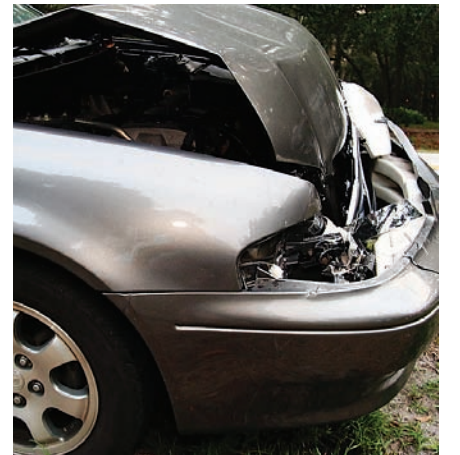
saying that there isn't "enough time to obtain a valid Indian visa" for his wife. Responding to Kuttappan's tweet, Congress MP from Thiruvananthapuram, Shashi Tharoor said that he is now in direct touch with Sebastian, and has con-

tacted External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's office for an emergency evacuation. "I am in touch with him directly in Khartoum and have contacted @DrJaishankar's office to arrange for an emergency evacuation on a temporary permit till her OCI card can be processed," Tharoor wrote in response to the tweet. "MEA (Ministry of External Affairs) will probably need to coordinate with MHA (Ministry of Home Affairs) to get this done. My sympathies are with him," Tharoor wrote. There are approximately 4,000 Indian citizens in Sudan, and according to the Indian Embassy in Khartoum, about 1,500 of them are longtime residents. Violent clashes that erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces on April 15, continues unabated. According to Sudan's Health Ministry, the violence has left at least 424 people dead and about 3,730 wounded.

Two Indian expats killed in separate accidents in UAE: Report

Dubai | Agencies

Two Indian expats died in separate transport accidents during the Eid-ul-Fitr holidays in the UAE, a media report said. Sharjah-based Abhilash, 38, had gone boating with his colleagues in Khor Fakkan when the accident took place, the Khaleej Times newspaper reported. Three other people, including a child, were injured in the accident with at least one of them in critical condition, the Sharjah Police said on Monday. There were 16 passengers on the boat when the accident took place, the report said, not mentioning the exact date or time of the accident. Abhilash's body is presently being kept at the mortuary in Khor Fakkan Hospital. He is survived by his wife and daughter. In another accident, Subeesh Chozhiamparambath, 35, from Kerala was killed and two others severely injured when a car in which they were travelling crashed in Al Mafraq area of Abu Dhabi. Subeesh from Palakkad was travelling from Al Samha to Mussafah for Eid shopping when he met with the accident on April 20. An Abu Dhabi resident for the past two years, Subeesh worked at a landscaping company, and died exactly a month before turning 36 years-old.



"It was a multiple-car crash in the Al Mafraq area. Subeesh along with two others were sitting in the back seat. The car they were travelling in was hit. Subeesh is no more," his cousin told Khaleej Times. Of the two people travelling with Subeesh, one person has been admitted to the ICU with severe injuries, and another has sustained minor wounds. "Subeesh got engaged. He was making plans to get married once he returned sometime later this year," said a relative, adding that the Indian Embassy helped them finish necessary paperwork for repatriation.

7.1-MAGNITUDE QUAKE JOLTS NEW ZEALAND'S KERMADEC ISLANDS

Wellington | New Zealand is assessing the possibility of a tsunami risk after a 7.1-magnitude earthquake jolted the country's northeast islands region on Monday. The quake hit the Kermadec Islands region with a depth of 49 km at 12:41 p.m. local time, Xinhua news agency reported. People should be self-evacuating immediately from all places near the coast where the earthquake was felt "for longer than a minute or was strong enough that it was hard to stand," New Zealand's National Emergency Management Agency said in a statement. "In these areas a tsunami may have been generated and may arrive quickly, so evacuate immediately to the nearest high ground or as far inland as possible," it added.

NYC MAYOR NAMES INDIAN-AMERICAN TO RACIAL ADVISORY BOARD

New York | Agencies

New York City Mayor Eric Adams has appointed Indian-American Udai Tambar to a newly-formed advisory board on implementation of the Racial Justice Charter Amendments. The 15-member advisory board will help ensure the city continues to lead the nation in innovative, racial equity work and carries out the city's newly enshrined charter changes. Tambar most recently served as Vice President of Community Health at Northwell Health and is currently the President and CEO of New York Junior Tennis & Learning (NYJTL) -- the largest non-profit youth tennis and education program in the country, serving 85,000 K-12 NYC youth. "I am excited to partner with the new advisory board to represent NYC's most resilient communities," Tambar said in a statement released by Mayor Adams' office. "A majority of the families we serve at NYJTL are BIPOC New Yorkers, and it is crucial that this new racial equity infrastructure ensures that they live in a society where they can flourish and achieve their fullest potential," he added.



Tambar has devoted much of his career to serving the youth, including serving as Chief of Staff and Director of Youth & Children Services for the NYC Deputy Mayor for Health

and Human Services, and as the Executive Director for South Asian Youth Action (SAYA!). He graduated from Cornell University with a Bachelor of Arts and received a Masters in Public Affairs from Princeton University. "Our city has come a long way in the fight for racial justice, but there is still much more work to do to end systemic inequity," Mayor Adams said in a statement. "We are proud to announce the launch of this advisory board, which will help us apply the critical actions needed to these important initiatives. We are fully committed to advancing equity for New Yorkers from all backgrounds and walks of life," he added. The advisory board will bring together 15 diverse leaders with significant experience successfully implementing large-scale change within government and with a proven commitment to racial equity, a release from Mayor Adams' office said. In collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Equity, these leaders will tackle the structure, design, and development of the new, forthcoming office and commission, as well as the citywide racial equity plans and the true cost of living measure.

LIGHTNING STRIKES KILL 9 IN BANGLADESH

Dhaka | A series of lightning strikes in Bangladesh killed nine people in less than two hours amidst heavy rain, officials said on Monday. The deaths were reported in different areas of Sunamganj, Moulvibazar and Sylhet districts between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. on Sunday, reports Xinhua news agency. The majority of the fatalities occurred in rural areas where people were working on their farmlands. Death due to lightning strikes is common in the densely populated country during this time of the year, as the weather changes from the dry to the rainy summer season. Bangladesh has seen a surge in lightning strike deaths, with hundreds of fatalities recorded annually in the past few years.



"GETTING HIGH AT 9": DEVENDRA FADNAVIS'S DIG AFTER SANJAY RAUT'S FORECAST

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Soon after Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut's "death warrant" remark for the Eknath Shinde-led Maharashtra government, Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis shot back with a 'doping in sports' analogy. Speaking in Marathi at a wrestling event, Fadnavis, without naming Raut, said some people are trying to wrestle while getting high at 9 am.

"There's wrestling going on in politics as well. We all know some wrestlers were banned for doping in wrestling. Now, some people in politics are also today getting high at 9 in the morning and trying to wrestle. But wrestlers who dope have to eventually get out of the sport," he said, adding that only 'real' wrestlers win.

"We won the fight under the leadership of (Chief Minister) Eknath Shinde with your blessings. Keep blessing us so that we win again in 2024 (Lok Sabha elections)," Fadnavis further said.

Known for his sharp jibes at political opponents, Uddhav Thackeray's close aide Sanjay Raut yesterday



claimed the "death warrant" of the Eknath Shinde-led Maharashtra government has been issued, and it will collapse in the next 15-20 days. His party is waiting for the court's order and expecting that justice will be done, Raut said, alluding to the Supreme Court's pending judgement on a batch of pleas including one seeking disqualification of 16 Shiv Sena MLAs (of Shinde's party) who revolted against the Thackeray leadership.

"The government of the existing chief minister and his 40 MLAs will collapse in 15-20 days. The death warrant of this government has been issued. It is now to be decided who will sign it," Raut claimed.

The Rajya Sabha member had earlier claimed the Eknath Shinde government will collapse in February, drawing a taunt from state Education Minister Deepak Kesarkar, who called him a "fake astrologer".

Meanwhile, there's already an

increasing buzz of politicking within the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), which comprises Congress, the Thackeray faction of the Shiv Sena, and Sharad Pawar-led NCP, over speculation of a shift in political fortunes.

Sharad Pawar on Sunday said he is with the MVA and wishes to work together, but one's wish isn't all that matters. "There are several processes...the issue of seat distribution, party's demands... How can we say anything right now?" he said when asked about his party's future with the opposition alliance.

While Eknath Shinde used Pawar's remark as ammunition, saying the NCP chief is a tall leader and his comments are always important and serious, Sanjay Raut said he believes Mr Pawar's remark has been misconstrued. The Supreme Court had last month reserved its verdict on a batch of cross-petitions of Uddhav Thackeray and Eknath Shinde factions on last year's political crisis in the state, when Mr Shinde and 39 MLAs rebelled against the Sena leadership resulting in the party's split and collapse of the Maha Vikas Aghadi government.

"Confusion Among Leaders": State BJP Chief on Maharashtra opposition unity

Nagpur | Agencies

Maharashtra BJP chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule today took a swipe at the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition and said that there was "confusion" among its leaders about the longevity of the alliance.

BJP's reaction comes after Sharad Pawar expressed concerns over the unity of the MVA in Maharashtra in the run-up to the state Assembly elections.

Sharad Pawar in Amravati said, "Today, we are a part of Maha Vikas Aghadi, and we are willing to work together. But the desire alone is not always enough. The allotment of seats, whether there are any problems or not, has not been discussed yet. So how can I tell you about this?" Speaking to ANI, Chandrashekhar Bawankule said, "What Sharad Pawar has said is his personal opinion on Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA). Pawar sahib will soon know if those who are abandoned by their own people can really lead MVA. There is confusion among its leaders as well as the public about how far the Maha Vikas Aghadi will go." However, Shiv Sena (Uddhav Bal Thackeray) leader Sanjay Raut on Monday stated that the coalition would remain intact.

Reacting to the NCP chief's remarks, Raut said, "Maha Vikas Aghadi will remain. Its prominent leaders are Uddhav Thackeray and Sharad Pawar. In 2024, MVA parties will fight



(Maharashtra Assembly) election together."

Earlier, amid speculations of Ajit Pawar joining the Bharatiya Janata Party, Maharashtra BJP President Chandrashekhar Bawankule on Wednesday said that the NCP leader or any person who wants to join the party would be welcomed.

"The doors of the party are open for everyone who works for the country and believes in BJP's ideology," Chandrashekhar Bawankule said. However, former Maharashtra deputy chief minister, Ajit Pawar dismissed "rumours" about switching over to the BJP and emphasised that he would remain with the NCP. "No truth in the rumours spread about me. I am with the NCP and will remain with the party," Ajit Pawar told the media.

MPs, MLAs with more than 2 children should be made...: Ajit Pawar

Team Absolute | Pune

Senior Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Ajit Pawar has said that people who go on to have more than two children should not be given any concessions, and even legislators in such cases should be made ineligible to contest elections.

India has surpassed China in terms of population growth, Mr Pawar said while speaking at an event in Baramati on Sunday.

"My grandfather used to tell me that when we got independence, our population was 35 crore and now it has reached 142 crore, and for that, we are all responsible," the Leader of Opposition in the state legislative Assembly said.

Ajit Pawar said that in an interview two days ago, he had asserted that all political parties should take this issue seriously.

"Everyone should stop after having one or two children for the betterment of our country, state, district, and region," he said.

He further said that henceforth, no concessions should be given to people who have more than two children.

"When Vilasrao Deshmukh was the chief



minister, we were apprehensive while taking a decision that candidates aspiring to contest local body elections to gram panchayats, zilla parishads and taluka panchayats would be ineligible if they had three children," Pawar said.

"People ask why a similar decision was not taken with regard to MPs and MLAs. I tell them it is not in our hands. It is in the hands of the Centre and it is our demand that the Centre should do it," he said.

People will become more aware and conscious about the issue if they are not given any concessions, the NCP leader said.

MUMBAI-AHMEDABAD BULLET TRAIN CRAWLS; JUST 30% READY

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

The much-anticipated but hugely-delayed Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train has yet to pick up speed, as the last fiscal ended.

The mega-venture, which will be the country's first Bullet Train -- in the making since over five years now -- has achieved just 30.15 per cent overall physical progress till March 31, as per official figures.

On the Gujarat side, the progress is a little over one-third -- 35.23 per cent done; and on the Maharashtra side it's a dismal 19.65 per cent overall completed.

Around 56.34 of the civil works on the project has been achieved and pile work has been carried out on 272.89 km so far.

While pier work is done on 170.56 km, 45.40 km of girders have been launched so far, the Ministry of Railways (MoR) said recently.

India's maiden Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail project



(MAHSR) or Bullet Train, estimated to cost around Rs 108,000-crore, has been targeted for a trial run between Surat-Bilimora (63 km) by August 2026.

The entire 508 km-long Mumbai-

Ahmedabad corridor -- comprising 156 km in Maharashtra and 352 km in Gujarat -- is likely to commence full operations only by 2027.

As per the National High Speed Rail Corporation Ltd. (NHSRCL), the

Bullet Train would zoom at a maximum speed of 320 kmph, and the entire distance between Mumbai-Ahmedabad can be covered in just 127 minutes.

The MAHSR comprises 92 per cent high-speed elevated railway tracks through viaducts (total 460 km) and bridges (9.22 km), tunnels (25.87 km), embankments/cutting (12.9 km).

A major highlight will be the rail corridor passing through the eco-sensitive Thane Creek between Mumbai-Thane on the northern side, a significant part comprising Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary (TCFS) which was designated as a Ramsar Site in August 2022.

To avoid disturbing the flamingos at the TCFS location and other wildlife in the adjoining rich mangroves, the MAHSR corridor will pass through an undersea tunnel at this sector. It will be India's first undersea tunnel and the country's longest rail transport thoroughfare with a single tube of 13.2 metres diameters, as per MAHSR.

Pune Customs foils attempt to illegally export livestock to Dubai

Pune | Agencies

The Pune Customs on Monday foiled an attempt to export 3,500 live goats and sheep to Dubai and seized a vessel.

"Based on specific intelligence, the officers of Pune Customs, with the assistance of Indian Coast Guard (ICG), seized a vessel attempting to export about 3,500 live goats and sheep to Dubai from the Vijaydurg Port in Sindhudurg district, Maharashtra, under the guise of coastal cargo by an Indian vessel for supply to Gujarat," an official said.

The official added that the Pune Customs Commissionerate had received an unconfirmed intelligence regarding possible smuggling of goats/sheep out of India from the Konkan coast in Maharashtra. Discreet surveillance was carried



out on one of the vessels which had submitted documents intimating coastal (domestic) supply of livestock

to Gujarat via sea route from the Vijaydurg port to Okha Port in Gujarat's Devbhumi Dwarka.

When it was noticed that the vessel had changed course and was headed towards Dubai, a Coast Guard vessel was deployed to intercept and bring it to the Angre Port in Maharashtra where suitable facilities were available. The Indian Coast Guard intercepted the vessel in the early hours of April 21, at about 90 NM into the open sea. The vessel with livestock was escorted to the Jaigad anchorage where a team of Customs officers conducted a thorough search that resulted in the seizure of several incriminating documents, indicating conspiracy to illegally export livestock on the basis of forged documents.

The vessel, along with its crew and cargo, has been detained for investigation. "All local authorities, DG Shipping and animal boards have been alerted, and a relief action is also underway," the official said.

Three killed, 3 hurt in Nagpur MIDC factory fire

Nagpur | Agencies

At least three workers were killed in a major fire that broke out in a factory in the Hingna MIDC in Sonagaon-Nipani area of the district, officials said here on Monday.

The incident occurred around noon at the Katari Agro Pvt. Ltd. plant and teams of fire-fighters rushed to battle the conflagration.

Plumes of dark smoke were seen billowing out of the factory complex that was visible from long distances, said eyewitnesses.

At least three workers were charred in the blaze, while another three sustained severe burns and were rushed to nearby hospitals



for treatment. According to unconfirmed reports, some more workers were reportedly trapped inside the blazing factory premises and efforts are on to rescue them, though the cause of the fire is not known. Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis

expressed grief over the tragedy and has directed the Nagpur Collectorate and other agencies to take immediate rescue and relief operations. He has asked the officials to ensure proper treatment to the injured workers and was monitoring the situation from Mumbai.

Navi Mumbai tragedy 'man-made', says Shiv Sena-UBT memo to Governor

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Shiv Sena-UBT on Monday submitted a memorandum to Governor Ramesh Bais stating that the loss of 14 human lives after the 'Maharashtra Bhushan Award' 2022 ceremony in Navi Mumbai was a "man-made tragedy".

A delegation, led by Leader of Opposition in the Council, Ambadas Danve and other senior leaders met the Governor and demanded that a high-level probe should be instituted into the April 16 tragedy, and those found guilty should be booked for culpable homicide.

The leaders including MPs, legislators and party officials like Arvind Sawant, Anil Parab, Ravindra Waikar, Dr Manisha Kayande, and Sachin Ahir, said that the "insensitive" government erred in not taking into account the high temperatures in Kharghar (the venue



grounds) in Navi Mumbai, while holding the mega-event in the open.

"It was a state function and they should have made arrangements for a marquee, fans, sufficient drinking water and other amenities for the people. It is shocking that the government and organisers did not take these

factors into account and it resulted into such a huge tragedy," the memorandum said.

They pointed out that the avoidable man-made disaster has served to spoil the image of Maharashtra and now measures must be taken to ensure that such can be avoided in the future.

After Centre's protocols applied, Maha reports zero pesticide-related deaths

Team Absolute | Nagpur

After the Centre's protocols for spraying insecticides in farmlands were implemented in 2018, Maharashtra has reported zero pesticide-related deaths of farm workers, a leading activist said here on Monday.

Shiv Sena (UBT)'s farmer-face Kishore Tiwari said that in 2016-2017, more than 40 farm workers in the state lost their lives while spraying insecticides in their fields, especially cotton farms, besides more deaths elsewhere in the country.

"Following our strong pressures, the Centre had implemented a set of protocols from 2018 which have been rigorously implemented in the farmlands. The results are impressive with zero pesticide-related deaths in Maharashtra," Tiwari pointed out.

Among the set of rules prescribed by the government are the use of full body kit while spraying the deadly insecticides, ban on daytime spraying as it created toxicity, using drones to spray in the fields, monitoring water quality, among others. After studying the outcome for five years, Tiwari has written a letter to Dr. J.P. Singh, Plant Protection Advisor in the Union Ministry of



Agriculture, of the protocol's impact in Maharashtra cotton farms.

"Farmers are now fully in support of these positive protocols on insecticides use. They are not only protecting the farmers and farm workers from the related health hazards, but also proving to be cost-effective and helping boost farm incomes," Tiwari pointed out.

Besides, he informed Dr. Singh that the domestically manufactured insecticides are effective and affordable compared to the very expen-

sive imported varieties which led to sharp increase in the input costs for the farmers. Tiwari, the former Chairman of Vasantrao Naik Sheti Swavalamban Mission (VNSSM), said cotton is a highly 'input-intensive crop' owing to its longer duration in the field, making it susceptible to attacks by pests like Pink Bollworms, White Fly, Thrips, Jassids, etc.

Smaller farmers with less than one hectares land could not afford the required six-seven different insecticide sprays as the new products cost more than Rs 10,000/litre, adding hugely to other costs like expensive labour, fertilisers, diesel, mechanisation, etc. Most agriculturists, particularly the small farmers have been using the traditional insecticides like the Monocrotophos family that is safe for humans, effective against cotton insects, and doubled the cotton growers' yield. Hence, the cultivators have hailed the Centre's move to continue the use of 24 insecticides based on the scientific data of experts," Tiwari said.

The move followed a major pilot project in 2017 through multiple agencies like Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh Agriculture University, Akola, Department of Agriculture, medicos, and other experts carried out on the issue among the cotton farmers.



'Gadot should keep doing'

Ana De Armas responds to rumours that she may replace Gal Gadot as Wonder Woman

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Ana de Armas has finally shared a response to the Wonder Woman rumours. The Cuban-born actress has broken her silence on the speculation that she will replace Gal Gadot as the new Wonder Woman, reports [aceshowbiz.com](#). In the Wired Auto Complete Interview, the 'Blonde' actress was asked if she's going to take over the Wonder Woman role in the new DCEU under the supervision of James Gunn and Peter Safran. Showing her support for the Israeli actress to keep the mantle, she responded: "Well I feel like Gal Gadot is doing a great job, so, you know, I think she should keep doing that." Words swirled on the Internet that de Armas could become the new Wonder Woman after DC decided not to move forward with Patty Jenkins' 'Wonder Woman 3'. It was reported in December 2022 that the director decided to walk away from the project after Gunn and Safran, who are tasked with reshaping the DC landscape, turned down her treatment for the threequel. Clarifying the reports, Jenkins said in a lengthy statement released via Twitter, "Here are the facts: I originally left Rogue Squadron after a long and productive development process when it became clear it couldn't happen soon enough and I did not want to delay WW3 any further."



Elizabeth Olsen finds it 'ridiculous' doing her own stunts

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Elizabeth Olsen has talked about doing her own stunts and said that there are "stunt doubles" for a reason.

During Wednesday's episode of 'The Late Show', the 'Love & Death' star told Stephen Colbert that she has found doing most of her stunts in the Marvel Cinematic Universe "ridiculous," reports [hollywoodreporter.com](#).

When specifically doing stunts attached to a wire, she said: "Your stomach leaves you. It's like, I guess, the joy people get on roller coasters, which I don't get, but people love that feeling."

The 'Godzilla' actress said when she first started doing stunts, she would just laugh, but that she's "definitely recovered from my giddiness. Sometimes I'm just like, 'Okay, how many more of these do you want? I can do this all day,' kind of thing. But sometimes I get a little freaked out."

She even recalled filming a stunt for Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness, where she had to be dropped from 30 feet in the air.

"They wanted to drop me pretty quickly so that it looked like it had an impact, but I kept landing like Peter Pan, kind of like fencing," she said. "I was like, 'Just use the double. This is so ridiculous. There is a double for a reason. Like, face replaces.' They do it all the time."

But Olsen said that they ended up using her take in the film. "We've had so much technology, growth through these movies, and they just chose to really use me," she added.

'VERY HAPPY & COMFORTABLE TOGETHER'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Shawn Mendes showed Camila Cabello with literal flowers amid speculation of their reconciled romance following their Coachella reunion.



Mendes was seen picking up flowers ahead of his meetup with Camila. He was photographed carrying a bouquet of white and purple flowers into his SUV in Los Angeles, reports [aceshowbiz.com](#).

The heartthrob appeared to be in a great mood, smiling as he returned to his parked vehicle while pushing a trolley loaded with a bundle of firewood and some grocery bags. He then loaded all the items he purchased at a store into his car. Shawn went low-key dur-

Shawn Mendes spotted picking up flowers before date night with Camila Cabello

ing the grocery run, wearing a white T-shirt, black pants and white sneakers. Just several minutes later, Camila was pictured visiting Shawn's house in West Hollywood. She appeared to be trying to go incognito as she sported an orange tracksuit with the hood over her head while entering his house about 30 minutes after he picked up the flowers. "My friends and I were walking down Santa Monica Blvd. just after 8 p.m. on Wednesday night when I looked up from my phone and saw Shawn and Camila walking toward us holding hands," the eyewitness told Page Six. "I clearly had a shocked look on my face because Shawn looked at me and smiled because he knew I recognised him," the fan went on dishing: "They were deep in conversation and seemed very happy and comfortable together."

Jennifer Aniston, Adam Sandler bond over their 'weird sense of humour'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Jennifer Aniston has declared that Adam Sandler is one of her "absolute favourite people in the world." The Hollywood co-stars are friends since their early twenties and starred alongside each in three films, including their latest 'Murder Mystery 2', and the former 'Friends' star said that having the "same weird sense of humour" is why they get along so well, reports [aceshowbiz.com](#).

"It comes from us just being us, I think. We have been friends for more than 30 years. We met at Jerry's Deli on Ventura Boulevard when we were 20 and 22 and we have been friends ever since," she said to Best UK magazine.

"This is the third movie we have got to do together, and Adam is always a joy to work with, as well as being one of my absolute favourite people in the world. We make each other laugh. We have the



same weird sense of humour. That's always a good thing." She added: "I am so happy we got to work together, and that we got to do it all again on this movie." Jennifer recently admitted Adam calls her out on her dating choices. The actress - who was previously married to Brad Pitt and Justin Theroux - revealed that Adam has been known to question some of her romantic decisions over the years.

Appearing on 'The Tonight Show', she told host Jimmy Fallon: "If I get anything from him, it's 'What are you doing?' Usually based on someone I'm dating." It's not all one-sided though as the sitcom legend pointed out that she is more than happy to help him out too. She added: "I very much love to take care of him. He's so concerned with taking care of everybody else, which he really does,

and he doesn't take care of himself." Pausing for a moment, she continued: "I'm sorry to call you out on national television, Adam, but you have to know this. And I have a little arsenal of herbs in my trailer, and I make him smoothies when I can and give him all sorts of Chinese herbs when he's exhausted. I'm like the mobile pharmacy. I'm the set medic." Aniston admitted Sandler's wife Jackie Sandler tells her that him taking her advice lasts "about a minute."

SISU: A HARD HITTING ACCOUNT OF HITLER ERA THAT NAILS THE NAZIS, QUITE LITERALLY

FILM REVIEW
SHACHI CHATURVEDI
Cast: Jorma Tommila, Mimosa Willamo & Aksel Hennie
Director: Jalmari Helander
Runtime: 93 mins
Ratings: 3/5



Synopsis : During the final days of the Second World War, a lone prospector meets Nazis on a scorched-earth retreat in northern Finland. When the troops decide to seize his riches, they immediately realise they have encountered no ordinary miner.
Review : The film is divided into seven chapters, and it opens with a guy delving into the dirt in search of gold. Soon after, he discovers a plethora of objectives and chooses to take them someplace. Where? Go find out. Returning to the narrative, he comes across a Nazi soldier who decides to fool with him, unaware that he is none other than Koschei, the immortal.
A soldier who is said to have slain over 300 Russians on his alone. The murdering war

begins from here. The tale of the Nazis vs the Koschei. When it comes to the screenplay and plot, the well-written and executed script manages to offer goosebumps with high-octane action and a lot of dead bodies and blood. It is a touch over the top in places, but who doesn't like watching Nazis killed?
In terms of standout performances, I have no words for this man Jorma Tommila. The way he looks, moves, and conducts himself completely convinces you that he is capable of performing some humanly unattainable tasks. The dude wins hearts with all that blood on his face and some real acting.
Mimosa Willamo plays one of the hostages held by Nazis. She excels in her job as she is able to retain her emotions and expressions throughout.

Aksel Hennie plays Nazi's leader and he is the actual fun factor since he portrays himself as a tough guy but constantly pushes his squad members forward anytime he smells something fishy, which makes him a humorous aspect.
Take a bow, whoever did the VFX and make-up to depict the scars; everything looked so real and authentic that you were willing to take anything that was presented to you at one point.
Regarding the background score, as the film demands, there are no songs, but what a fantastic background sound effect. The complete silence and the unexpected explosion sounds send chills down your spine.
Aside from everything else, the presence of humour is admirable. Yes, you read that correctly. There are no words to describe how serious this picture is, yet how they have maintained the comic factor intact is pretty astonishing. During the most serious scenes, when you're sulking in your chairs and hiding to avoid the blood, you get to take a breath and laugh at how something is presented to you.
Conclusion : Although there are some over-the-top instances, the film as a whole is exceptional and should be seen in cinemas.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY
AGOS
DAOU
CCCA
Da
Kim Kardashian





IPL 2023: BRILLIANT BOWLING HELPS DELHI CAPITALS DEFEND LOW SCORE AGAINST SUNRISERS

Hyderabad | Agencies

Delhi Capitals came up with a brilliant bowling effort to squeeze out a 7-run win against Sunrisers Hyderabad, negating some brilliant late-order batting by Heinrich Klaasen and Washington Sundar in Match 34 of IPL 2023 here on Monday.

It was a superb bowling effort by the Delhi Capitals bowlers as Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Anrich Nortje and Ishant Sharma applied the squeeze as they throttled the Sunrisers Hyderabad innings in a low-scoring encounter.

Washington Sundar had claimed 3-28 and three batters were run-out as Delhi Capitals were restricted to 144/9 in 20 overs. Though it looked like they had fallen 20 runs short, in the end, it proved enough thanks to the brilliant effort put up by the DC bowlers. After Mayank Agarwal (49) had maintained the Sunrisers' chances with a crucial knock, Heinrich Klaasen (31 off 19 balls, 3x4, 1x6) and Sundar (24 not out off 15, 3x4) revived their chances after a



middle-order wobble. Thanks to their efforts, Sunrisers Hyderabad needed 38 runs off 18 balls and after Klaasen and Sundar claimed 15 runs in the 18th over bowled by Mukesh Kumar, Nortje allowed SRH only 10 runs in

the 19th over despite Sundar hitting a fine boundary. They needed 13 runs from the last six deliveries but Mukesh Kumar bowled a superb final over to win the match for Delhi. He allowed only five runs as SRH ended

with 137/6 in 20 overs and fell short by a narrow margin.

This was the second successive win for Delhi Capitals as they continue their revival thanks to a brilliant effort by their bowlers. SRH succumbed to their third defeat in a row.

Mayank Agarwal had kept Sunrisers Hyderabad in the hunt as he struck a 39-ball 49 as they recovered from a poor Power-play in which they managed to score only 39/1. Delhi Capitals bowlers came up with a disciplined effort and kept the SRH batters under pressure, dried up the boundaries and claimed crucial wickets in the middle part of the innings as the asking rate kept climbing.

Brief scores

Delhi Capitals 144/9 in 20 overs (Axar Patel 34, Manish Pandey 34; Washington Sundar 3-28, Bhuvneshwar Kumar 2-11) beat Sunrisers Hyderabad 137/6 in 20 overs (Mayank Agarwal 49, Heinrich Klaasen 31, Washington Sundar 24 not out; Axar Patel 2-21, Anrich Nortje 2-33) by 7 runs.

BADMINTON ASIA CHAMPIONSHIPS 2023

P.V. Sindhu, Saina, and Prannoy will be leading team India

Dubai | Agencies

India will be virtually full strength in the women's singles with their two best players, Olympic medallists P.V. Sindhu and Saina Nehwal leading the campaign at the Badminton Asia Championships 2023 starting today.

Malvika Bansod and Aakarshi Kashyap are the other Indian players in the fray in the women's singles category in the event that will be played at the Sheikh Rashid Bin Hamdan Indoor Hall, Al Nasr Club in Dubai. The finals will be played on April 30.

In the men's singles category, the Indian campaign will be led by H.S Prannoy, Kidambi Srikanth and Lakshya Sen.

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will be India's main hope in the men's doubles while the



young pair of Gayatri Gopichand and Treasa Jolly will be in focus in the women's doubles section of the 40th edition of Badminton Asia Championships which will be held for the first time in the Middle East.

HS Prannoy is seeded eighth in the men's singles category. In the men's doubles, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag

Shetty are seeded sixth. In the men's singles, world No. 9 Prannoy will take on Myanmar's Phone Pyae Naing in the first round. Lakshya Sen, world No. 24, will be up against seventh seed Loh Kean Yew of Singapore. World No. 23 Kidambi Srikanth will play his first-round match against Bahrain's Adnan Ebrahim, said a report on Olympics.com.

Sachin Tendulkar, Brian Lara honoured at Sydney Cricket Ground

Sydney | Agencies

On his 50th birthday Sachin Tendulkar was honoured at the Sydney Cricket Ground with a set of gates named after him and West Indies great Brian Lara.

The gates, used to access the field of play, were unveiled to mark Tendulkar's 50th birthday and 30 years since Lara's innings of 277 at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

The gates were unveiled by SCG and Venues NSW Chairman Rod McGeoch AO and CEO Kerrie Mather, as well as Cricket Australia CEO Nick Hockley.

"All visiting cricket players will take to the field through the Lara-Tendulkar Gates, which are situated between the Members Pavilion's away dressing room and the Noble Bradman Messenger Stand.



The Australian cricket team enters the field via the Don Bradman Gates between the Members and Ladies Pavilions, while the Arthur Morris and Alan Davidson Gates front Driver Avenue," the SCG statement read.

"The Sydney Cricket Ground has been my favourite ground away from India," Tendulkar said. "I have had some great memo-

ries at the SCG right from my first tour of Australia in 1991-92. It is a great honour to have the gates used by all visiting cricketers to access the field of play at the SCG named after me and my good friend Brian.

"I would like to thank the team at the SCG and Cricket Australia for this kind gesture. I look forward to visiting the SCG soon."

LEVERKUSEN EDGE LEIPZIG IN BUNDESLIGA

Berlin | Leipzig slipped out of the Bundesliga's top four as goals from Adam Hlozek and Nadiem Amiri secured Bayer Leverkusen a 2-0 victory in the 29th round.

The Red Bulls assumed control from the start and staged a lively opening period as Kevin Kampl and Josko Gvardiol came close in quick succession, reports Xinhua news agency. Leipzig dominated possession and attempted some long-range efforts, while Leverkusen defended deep and looked for counterattack opportunities. The Werkself posed more danger in front of Leipzig's area as Piero Hincapié's header rattled the woodwork at the half-hour mark. Leverkusen eventually scored the opener with 40 minutes gone when Moussa Diaby's cut-back pass allowed Hlozek to finish the job following a fast break. Leipzig increased the pressure after the restart, but Christopher Nkunku pulled wide from a promising position in the 62nd minute, and goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky palmed away Timo Werner's dangerous shot five minutes later. Leipzig's hopes of a comeback were dashed in the closing stages as Dominik Szoboszlai received his marching orders after conceding a penalty in the 86th minute. Amiri stepped up and kept his nerves from the spot to make it two. Elsewhere, Union Berlin maintained its third place in the standings after seeing off Borussia Mönchengladbach with Seraldo Becker's sole goal, while Freiburg secured its second straight win after crushing relegation-threatened Schalke 4-0.



La Liga

Huge win for Barcelona, Sevilla revival continues

Madrid | Agencies

This season's La Liga title is all but assured to end up in FC Barcelona's trophy room after the leaders beat Atletico Madrid 1-0 to maintain their 11-point lead at the top of the table.

There were doubts ahead of the game as Barca failed to score in their last three matches, and those doubts were only heightened when Antoine Griezmann chipped the ball against their crossbar in the first minute of the match, reports Xinhua.

However, with Marc-Andre ter Stegen in excellent form and Frenkie de Jong and Pedri both available for coach Xavi Hernandez, Barca were able to



hold off a rival that had won 10 of their last 12 matches. Ferran Torres scored the only goal of the game two minutes from halftime, with a powerful shot that Atletico keeper Jan Oblak will be disappointed not to have saved. Betis slipped to a 3-2 defeat away to Osasuna, and are in danger of slipping out of the top-six after Athletic Club Bilbao made it three wins and a draw from their

last four games with a comfortable 2-1 win away to struggling Almeria. Athletic's win leaves them just a point behind sixth place Villarreal after the latter became Sevilla's third victim in a week, slipping to a 2-1 defeat in the Sanchez Pizjuan Stadium.

Monchu's 24th-minute goal helped Valladolid make it six points from two games to move them five points clear of the bottom three with a 1-0 win at home to Girona.

Valencia claimed a vital win, but remains in the bottom three after first-half goals from Samuel Lino and a penalty from Gonzalo Verdu saw them win 2-0 away to bottom side Elche, who remain with 13 points all season.

ATP Rankings

Djokovic maintains top spot; Alcaraz closes in on no.1 position

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Novak Djokovic of Serbia maintained his top spot in the ATP rankings this week despite his early exit from the Banja Luka Open tennis tournament. The 35-year-old lost in the quarterfinals in Banja Luka and as a result, his total points dropped by 105.

Spain's Carlos Alcaraz, who lifted the trophy in Barcelona, remained at No. 2 after and is just 365 points behind the Serb, who has pulled out of this week's Madrid Masters.

Russia's Daniil Medvedev, who has won more matches than any other player on the tour in 2023 with 31 victories, returned to the Top-3 for the first time since October 31 last year. The Russian



swapped places with Norway's Casper Ruud, who suffered an early exit in Barcelona.

There is no change in the rest of the top 10 with Stefanos Tsitsipas at No. 5, Banja Luka finalist Andrey

Rublev at No. 6, Munich champion Holger Rune at No. 7, Italy's Jannik Sinner at No. 8, Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime at No. 9 and American Taylor Fritz at No. 10.

Dusan Lajovic is the biggest mover in the rankings. The Serbian has jumped 30 spots after he won his second tour-level title at the Srpska Open in Banja Luka.

Lajovic overcame Djokovic and Rublev en route to the title to earn two Top-10 wins at the same event for the first time.

Former US Open champion Dominic Thiem of Austria has returned to the Top 100 in the ATP Rankings after he enjoyed a run to the quarter-finals at the BMW Open by American Express in Munich.

SL vs IRE 2nd Test

ANDREW BALBIRNIE HITS 95 AS IRELAND REACH 319/4 ON DAY ONE

Galle | Agencies

Captain Andrew Balbirnie hit a masterful 95 before Lorcan Tucker surpassed him as Ireland's leading Test run-scorer as Ireland reached 319/4 on Day One of the second and final Test match of the series against Sri Lanka on Monday.

Balbirnie registered his career-best Test score in a century stand with Paul Stirling but was dismissed five runs short of a maiden hundred in the evening session. Stirling also reached a career-best total of 74 before retiring hurt, struggling with cramps. The two batting stalwarts led the rebuilding job after Sri Lanka took early wickets, reducing the visitors to 43/2, with PJ Moor and James



McCullum falling cheaply. Harry Tector was given out on an lbw decision on 11, but the review showed the ball bouncing over the wicket. But he was only able to add another seven runs before he charged down the pitch off Prabath Jayasuriya, and hit straight to a stretching mid-

fielder. That led to Stirling's arrival at the crease, fresh off the plane having joined the squad for this match only. True to style, he made his intentions clear early on, thumping a length ball over the square-leg boundary for a six to get off the mark on his third ball. Stirling

continued to be aggressive after lunch, hitting two more boundaries in consecutive overs early on and allowing Balbirnie to settle into an accumulator role at the other end. Before the lunch break, Balbirnie had reached his third Test match half-century off just 44 balls -- the fastest ever for Ireland. But, with Stirling pushing on at the other end, Balbirnie moved into the anchor role. Stirling was dropped two balls before reaching his half-century, as Kusal Mendis put down a low chance at slip, allowing him to get to fifty. After a dominant middle session, Ireland faltered slightly.

Brief scores: Ireland 319/4 in 90 overs (Andrew Balbirnie 95, Lorcan Tucker 78 not out; Prabath Jayasuriya 2-95) against Sri Lanka.

WTA Stuttgart

Iga Swiatek wins second straight title

Stuttgart, Germany | Agencies

Iga Swiatek of Poland retained her title with a straight-set victory over Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus in a match between the world's top two players at the WTA Stuttgart Grand Prix here.

Top seed Swiatek defeated world No. 2 Sabalenka 6-3, 6-4 after one hour and 50 minutes, in a rematch of last year's final on the indoor clay, capturing her 13th career singles title, reports Xinhua. Swiatek maintained her undefeated career record at the Stuttgart GP (8-0 in her two appearances) and now holds a 5-2 win-loss record against Sabalenka in their rivalry. It was also Swiatek's 20th win this year. It was the first clay-court final between the world's top two-ranked players in a decade, with the last one occurring at the 2013 Roland Garros, where No. 1 Serena Williams defeated No. 2 Maria Sharapova for the title.

Reigning Australian Open champion Sabalenka left Stuttgart with 23 match-wins this year. Despite reaching the final in each of the past three years, Sabalenka was denied by Ashleigh Barty in 2021 before her two losses to Swiatek.

In the doubles final, No. 2 seeds and last year's champions Desirae Krawczyk of the United States and Demi Schuurs of the Netherlands beat third seeds Nicole Melichar-Martinez of the United States and Giuliana Olmos of Mexico 6-4, 6-1.



Krawczyk and Schuurs triumphed at the Stuttgart GP last year for their first title as a pair, and they claimed their second title by dispatching

Melichar-Martinez and Olmos in 64 minutes. It was Krawczyk's ninth doubles title and the 16th for Schuurs.

Buenos Aires | Agencies

Ezequiel Barco and Miguel Borja scored either side of halftime as leaders River Plate secured their ninth straight victory in Argentina's Primera Division with a 2-0 defeat of Independiente.

Barco gave the hosts the lead in the 17th minute when he fired a long-range effort into the top-right corner, reports Xinhua.

Independiente were reduced to 10 men after Damian Perez was shown a second yellow card for a bad foul on Nacho Fernandez.

Colombian striker Borja doubled the advantage with a low strike 10 minutes from time.



The result leaves River Plate with 33 points from 13 matches, six points ahead of second-placed San Lorenzo. Independiente are 26th, 23

points off the pace. Earlier, Jorge Figo scored in the 100th minute to earn Boca Juniors a 2-2 draw at Rosario Central. Lautaro Giaccone put Rosario Central ahead with a 25th-minute strike before Martin Payero equalized just after the hour.

Teenage striker Alejo Veliz restored the hosts' lead shortly afterwards, but Figo netted in the last minute as Boca avoided a fourth consecutive defeat. The result leaves Rosario Central fourth in the 28-team standings with 23 points, eight points ahead of 17th-placed Boca.



'KHEL KHATAM, PAISA HAJAM'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan has a savage response to the verified tick mark of a few Twitter accounts getting restored for free.

The micro-blogging website has restored the blue tick verification for accounts with more than one million followers on the platform, but Amitabh, who has a whopping 48.4 million followers, paid for the subscription.

Now, he has asked the platform in a hilarious way about why he had to make payments despite having such a huge following on the website.

Amitabh tweeted: "Are maare gae Gulfam, biraj me maare gae Gulfam. Ae Twitter mausi, chahchi, beheni, tai, bua... jhauan bhar ke ta naam hain tumhaar."

He added: "Paise bharwa liye hamara neel kamal khaatir. Ab kahat ho jekar 1 m follower unkar neel kamal free ma. Humar to 48.4 m hain, ab? Khel khatam, paisa hajam?"

It was just last week, when the micro-blogging website took away the blue marks from several verified accounts.

Big B gave it his own spin and asked about not getting the tick mark despite payment. A day later, when it was restored, he thanked Twitter and even wrote a song for Elon Musk, with a sprinkle of humour.



BIG B'S SAVAGE RESPONSE ON GETTING BACK HIS BLUE TICK ON TWITTER



'PERFECT SYNC'

Anushka Sharma, Virat Kohli have a 'dance pe chance' in the gym

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Power couple Anushka Sharma and Virat Kohli shook-a-leg on Punjabi singer Shubh's song 'Elevated' in a new video. Anushka took to Instagram, where she shared a video of herself dancing along with her husband Virat in coordinated steps in the gym.

Virat is seen dressed in a black T-shirt paired with grey pants and a baseball cap. Anushka is seen in a printed shirt paired with ripped jeans. The end is with a blooper, where the actress bumps into the cricketer and he's heard saying: "Aah."

The 'Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi' actress captions the video with "Dance Pe Chance," a song which featured in her debut film with Shah Rukh Khan.

On the work front, Anushka will next be seen playing the role of Indian bowler Jhulan Goswami in the film 'Chakda Xpress'. The film will be releasing on Netflix. The release date of the movie is not out yet.



Akruti Bagla | Mumbai

Apart from her gorgeous looks, Aditi Rao Hydari has always managed to leave an indelible mark with her acting chops not only in Bollywood, but also down South. Looking at her trajectory, she might have played meaty roles in some films, but she has managed to give her best.

She has worked with some of renowned filmmakers like Vikramaditya Motwane, Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Imtiaz Ali, and Mani Ratnam among others. The actress has also time and again expressed her adulation towards ace makers validates her craft.

Aditi shared, "I am a director's actor, and I proudly assert that. I like to come on set, be a sponge and surrender to their vision. I got such a feeling for the time on Mani Ratnam's set. I felt like a kid in the playground, taking risks, being curious and I knew that I would be nurtured."

She further said, "I have always wanted to work in various languages. I never looked at it as being a 'Pan-India' star. I observed it as cinema, story and feelings, which has no language. As a kid who has grown up in a multicultural environment, I am familiar with such experiences."

On the work front, Aditi will be next seen in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Heeramandi with Sonakshi Sinha, Manisha Koirala, Richa Chadha, and others. The actress will be seen in Gandhi Talks with Vijay Sethupathi.

'TRULY GRATEFUL TO ALL MY FANS'

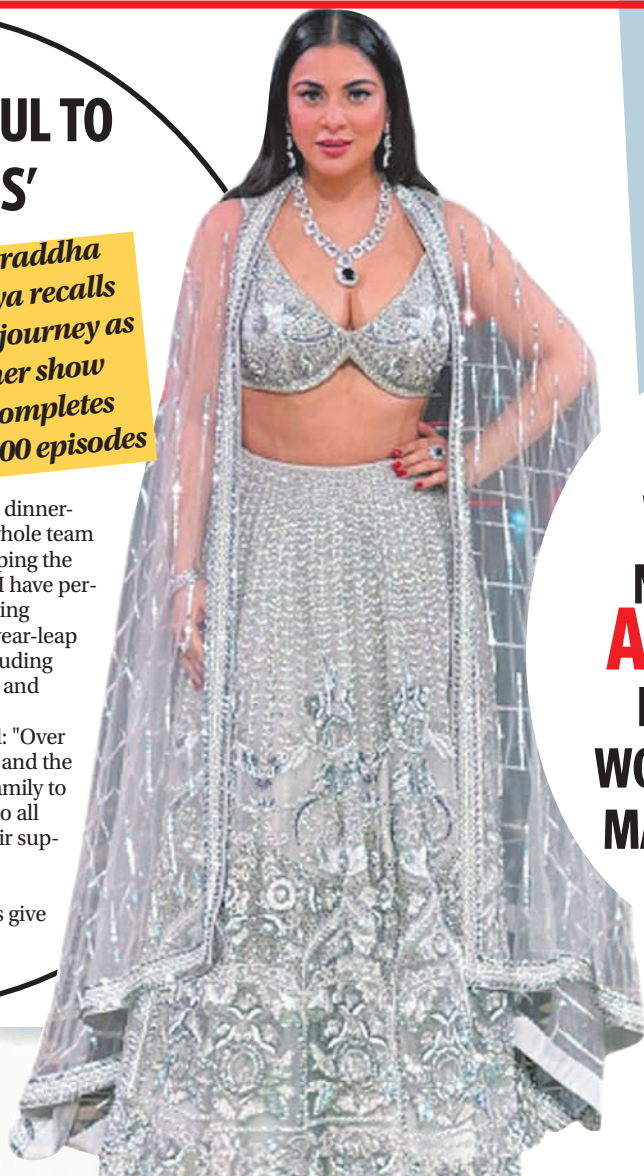
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Shraddha Arya, who is seen playing the role of Preeta in the show 'Kundali Bhagya', shared her excitement as the show completes 1,500 episodes. She recalls her journey and expresses gratitude to Ekta Kapoor and the audience for the love and recognition. She said: "It is to the show, Ekta ma'am and the creative team that I owe Preeta becoming a household name and a much sought-after dinner-table companion for our viewers. All these years, the whole team of 'Kundali Bhagya' has worked very hard towards keeping the show on top and personally, I have loved every scene I have performed as Preeta." The show that started in 2017 is going through a lot of twists and turns as it has taken a 20-year-leap and Shraddha and the new generation of actors including Paras Kalnawat (as Rajveer), Sana Sayyad (as Palki) and Baseer Ali (as Shaurya), have entered the show.

About her journey on the show, Shraddha said: "Over these last 6 years, my co-actors, the whole crew and the sets have become a second home and like a family to me. With this milestone, I am truly grateful to all my fans and followers who have given their support to us over all these years."

Congratulations to the whole team, I promise, I will continue to always give my best as Preeta."

Shraddha Arya recalls her journey as her show completes 1,500 episodes



I KNEW I WOULD BE NURTURED: ADITI RAO HYDARI ON WORKING WITH MANI RATNAM

Jeet shares his 'movie was supposed to be a web series'

Shachi Chaturvedi | Mumbai

Chengiz is a 2023 Indian Bengali-language period action thriller co-written and directed by Rajesh Ganguly based on Neeraj Pandey's narrative. The film has received several accolades since its premiere. While discussing the film and the journey, Jeet had an exclusive interview with Absolute India News.

While discussing the process, the actor said that the film was planned to be a web series. "The idea of the story and how it has been told. When Rajesh narrated it to me, it was a much lengthier story; it was for OTT. Then we discussed that we should make it into a film and not keep it for too long, and Rajesh converted that idea into a film. It is not a film that we have made, it is the dream that we have lived," Jeet shared.

Later, while discussing the difficulties, the star shared, "When you are chasing a dream and aiming to reach a goal, nothing is difficult as long as you enjoy every bit of it, and to be honest, we enjoyed everything, from the filmmaking process to each other's company. We fought, we loved, but everything for just one goal: only to make Chengiz happen."

While discussing future aspirations, we asked Jeet what he was looking forward to, to which the actor responded, "If you ask me, we all live with the same desire and aspiration: that each day becomes better, and I'm trying to focus on that. As humans, we have insatiable desires. We desire something new every time we accomplish something."



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Kriti Kharbanda